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The Verdict

FRANCIS GARY POWERS had his day yesterday, and a fine day it turned out to be.

He was explicitly and conclusively cleared by the Central Intelligence Agency of any neglect of duty in the abortive flight of his fragile U-2 plane over Russia. In fact, the report vindicated him as a cool and skilled airman who fulfilled "his obligations as an American." The report was supported by a Presidential board of inquiry.

The report was further corroborated by Mr. Powers' personal appearance before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He was impressive both in his story—about as dramatic as one could wish—and in his manner—about as quietly undramatic as one might expect.

His own words and the findings of the CIA and Presidential board put to shame those who had been insinuating, on the basis of rumor or insufficient information, that he had been remiss both in duties and character. He was remiss in neither.

The point is, Mr. Powers was not an espionage agent either in the melodramatic or ordinary sense of the term. He was an extremely capable pilot, trained to fly an espionage plane. And on the basis of previous missions, the CIA considered "he was one of the outstanding pilots in the whole U-2 program."

There is a finding that goes beyond that of the CIA or any other agency. That is the verdict of the American people. We are sure their verdict is that Mr. Powers has been affirmed in his status as a brave American.